

# Phoenix Rising



April 2016

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**MSR REPORT**

CHAPTER:	USS Dark Phoenix
REPORT FOR:	Mar, 2016
SUBMITTED:	04/05/2016
SUBMITTER:	RADM Ralph Planthold
ADDRESS:	2200 W 26th St #C-15
CITY:	Lawrence
STATE:	Kansas
ZIP/POSTAL:	66047
COUNTRY:	United States
PHONE:	813-244-9733
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XO:	ADM Sunnie Planthold
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PUBLICATION DT:	03/15/2016

**FLEET MEMBERS**

SCC	EXPIRE DT	RANK	NAME
44342	04/13/2017	ADM	Sunnie Planthold
46072	06/23/2016	COL	Patrick Malone
49691	04/13/2017	RADM	Ralph Planthold
55881	06/23/2016	CRMN	Michael Malone
61751	06/09/2016	PO3	Teague Banister
61754	06/09/2016	CDT	Ethan Banister
64850	06/09/2016	CDT	Emma Banister
70180	09/19/2016	ENS	Karessa Kow
70978	04/26/2016	LTJG	Rianna Melton
71621	03/03/2017	LTJG	Jeremy Schroeder
73140	01/26/2017	LT	John Bevan
73223	02/22/2017	CRMN	David Morton
73240	02/27/2017	CRMN	Carolyn Kaberline
73257	03/04/2017	CRMN	Ruth Lichtwardt
73652	06/05/2016	LTJG	Carrie Mills
73696	06/14/2016	ENS JG	El Johnston
73697	06/14/2016	ENS JG	Jean Martin
73875	08/02/2016	PO2	Travis Jackson
73876	08/02/2016	CRMN	Jamie Jackson
73877	08/02/2016	CDT	Gabriel Jackson
73878	08/02/2016	CDT	Larissa Jackson
73879	08/02/2016	CRMN	Verita Jackson
73886	08/02/2016	ENS	KLar Batt
73954	08/20/2016	LT	Brent Barbee Mr
74062	09/19/2016	ENS	Josh Levering
74085	09/27/2016	ENS	Rezty Felty
74086	09/27/2016	ENS	Laura Felty
74087	09/27/2016	CDT	Tesla Felty
74088	09/27/2016	CDT	Sagan Felty
74089	09/27/2016	CDT4	Dyson Felty
74246	11/13/2016	CRMN	Nicole E Blackburn
74365	12/23/2016	CRMN	Jim Robinson
74366	12/23/2016	CRMN	Mary Robinson
74487	08/02/2016	CDT	Hannah Batt
74503	02/03/2017	CRMN	Reuben Juarez
74504	02/03/2017	CRMN	Selena Juarez
74509	02/05/2017	CRMN	Carol Jean Walker
74601	02/23/2017	ENS	Fahad Far
74659	03/12/2017	ENS	Martin Peterson

**ACADEMY :**

**John Bevan**

- IOIE - School of Intel Gathering (SIG)
- SIG 304 - Interrogation Planning**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/07/2016
- SIG 305 - Interrogation Methods**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/07/2016
- SIG 212 NSA**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/07/2016

**SIG 213 US Intel Community**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/07/2016

**SIG 214 the FBIS**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/07/2016

IOPFR - College of Survival Studies (IOPFR:COSS)

**TSS 206 - Survival Blades**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/05/2016

**TSS 208 - Deadly Mushrooms**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/05/2016

**TSS 210 - Advanced Sanitation**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/05/2016

**TSS 212 - Hypothermia & Frostbite Survival**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/05/2016

**TSS 211 - Nutritional Diseases & Deficiencies**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/05/2016

IOSO - College of SpecOps Training (CSOT)

**DMS 100 - Overview**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/03/2016

**DMS 101D - Diving Training pt 1**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/03/2016

**DMS 102D - Diving Training pt 2**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/03/2016

IOSO - College of SpecOps Units (CSOU)

**SEALs 101 - Selection**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/27/2016

**SEALs 103 - Marksmanship**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/27/2016

**SEALs 104 - Field Skills**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/27/2016

SFA Awards

**ADP - Associate of Intelligence Operations**  
*Awarded* 03/11/2016

**ADP - Associate of Technology Studies**  
*Awarded* 03/11/2016

**Rezty Felty**

IOISS - College of Medicine (IOISS:SACOM)

**COM-101 - Basic Doctorate**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/14/2016

IOMS - College of Starship Operations (IOMS:COSS)

**CSO-105 - Communications Operations**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/27/2016

IOST - STARFLEET Officer's Radio School (IOST:SORS)

**SORS 201 - Beginnings of Radio**  
*HONORS* 03/03/2016

**SORS 202 - Broadcast Radio from Early Times to Today**  
*HONORS* 03/03/2016

IOST - Vulcan Academy of Science (IOST:VAS)

**VAS 305 - Specialist III in Space Exploration I**  
*HONORS* 03/27/2016

**Laura Felty**

IOIS - STARFLEET Officer's Leadership College (IOIS:SOLC)

**IOIS:SOLC-102 - VCS Exam**  
*PASS* 03/24/2016

IOIA - College of Law (IOIA:LAW)

**COL 101 - UFP Law**  
*PASS* 03/07/2016

**COL 202 - STARFLEET Procedure**  
*PASS* 03/07/2016

**Sagan Felty**

IOCS - Cadet College of Alien Studies (CCAS)

**NTA 101 - Name That Alien (6-9 year olds)**  
*DISTINCTION* 03/24/2016

IOCS - Cadet Preparatory College (CPC)

**CPC 100 - OTS-OCC Preparation - 6-9 year olds**  
*PASS* 03/23/2016

IOCS - Cadet Vulcan Academy of Science (CVAS)

**CVAS 102 - Vertebrates (6 - 9 year olds)**  
*HONORS* 03/23/2016

**Fahad Far**

IOIS - Officer's Training School (IOIS:OTS)

**OTS**  
*PASS* 03/26/2016

IOMS - College of Security (IOMS:COS)

**IOMS:COS-102 Basic Security Officers Course**  
*HONORS* 03/28/2016

**IOMS:COS-101 TOS Rank Recognition**  
*HONORS* 03/28/2016

**Martin Peterson**

IOIS - Officer's Training School (IOIS:OTS)

**OTS**  
*PASS* 03/28/2016

**OTHER INFO**

**MEETING DATE :** 03/26/2016

**PROMOTIONS :**

SCC:	NAME	NEW RANK	EFFECT DT
74085	Rezty Felty	LTJG	03/12/2016
74086	Laura Felty	LTJG	03/12/2016
74089	Dyson Felty	CDT3	03/12/2016
74601	Fahad Far	ENS	03/26/2016
74659	Martin Peterson	ENS	03/28/2016

**ACTIVITIES :**

- 03/04 SO/SOU Team Leader had dinner with SOU team member to discuss Special Operations training.
- 03/05 LTJG K. Batt and C. Kaberline, ENS L. Felty and R. Felty, CDT4 D. Felty, CDT H. Batt, S. Felty, and T. Felty attended the Farpoint Observatory Open House.
- 03/12 SO hosted Academy Night at his home. Those who attended were the Command Staff, ENS L. Felty and R. Felty, CDT3 D. Felty, CDT S. Felty and T. Felty.
- 03/13 Command Staff met over dinner at the SO's home.
- 03/15 Command Staff met over dinner at Applebee's.
- 03/18 SO hosted Game Night at his home. Event was attended by LT B. Barbee; LTJG L. Felty, R. Felty, R. Melton, and J. Schroeder; CDT3 D. Felty; CDT S. Felty and T. Felty; and guest T. Burns.

- 03/19 Command Staff met over dinner at SO's home.
- 03/20 CO and SO attended Sunday Funday in support of three of our crewmembers who were involved in the operation of the event and several SFI members who remain unassigned at this time but who will soon join our crew while forming a new chapter in Topeka.
- 03/20 Command Staff met over dinner with crewmembers and SFI members after Sunday Funday to discuss formation of Topeka chapter with ENS S. Juarez taking the role of Captain and Crewman N. Blackburn taking the role of XO.
- 03/25 CO and SO attended TopCon's AfterGlow II and spoke with some of the attendees regarding the soon-to-launch Topeka chapter-in-training.
- 03/26 USS Dark Phoenix monthly chapter meeting, 6 PM at Conroy's Pub with light attendance.



Seated L-R: LTJG Melton; SO; CO; XO; LTJG Kaberline.  
 Middle row: CDT S. Felty, T. Felty.  
 Back row: LTJG R. Felty, L. Felty; CDT3 D. Felty; ENS F. Far.



Promotions to LTJG were presented to ENS L. Felty and R. Felty. Promotion to the rank of ENS was presented to CRMN F. Far. (No photo)



Promotion to rank of CDT3 was presented to CDT4 D. Felty. Retroactively, promotion certificates were presented to LTJG Kaberline and Melton. (No photo)



Fleet Award certificate of *Order of Roddenberry Second Class* was presented to ADM S. Planthold.



Fleet Award certificate of *Order of Darmok and Jalad Second Class* was presented to LT J. Bevan.

- 03/26 SO hosted demonstration of Artemis at his home after the ship meeting. Those in attendance were all from the ship meeting minus LTJG C. Kaberline.



ENS F. Far took command of the ship during the third session of the evening and performed well, especially having not even seen the game prior to that evening. He commented that he would recommend it to the Topeka crewmembers when next he meets up with them.

- 03/27 Command Staff met over dinner at the SO's home. Major business discussed was pending updates to the Crew

Handbook.

- 03/29 Command Staff met over dinner at the CO's and XO's home. Main discussion was additions and more changes to the Crew Handbook as well as suggestions from handbooks used on other ships in the Fleet.

## FUTURE PLANS

- 04/01 **Game Night** at SO's home!
- 04/02 FanCon #45 at 4H Fairgrounds Building in Lawrence.
- 04/04 Chapter polo shirt order placed.
- 04/05 T-47 years until First Contact in 2063!
- 04/09 **Away Mission** to Farpoint Observatory Open House in Eskridge, KS.
- 04/15 **Game Night** at SO's home!
- 04/23 **USS Dark Phoenix monthly chapter meeting**, 6 PM at Perkins Restaurant in Lawrence.
- 04/24 STAR TREK 50th Anniversary Concert in Topeka. Command Staff and some crewmembers are volunteering as uniformed ushers.
- 04/29 **Game Night** at SO's home!
- 05/20 Planet Comicon Kansas City 2016. -22
- 06/25 **R12 Kansas Sector Picnic** at Shawnee Mission Park in Johnson County, KS.
- 08/12 **STARFLEET IC2016** in Louisville, KY. -14
- 08/12 KANSAS CITY COMIC CON 2016. -14

## COMMENTS :

- 02/05: Welcome aboard to CRMN Carol Walker!
- 02/23: Welcome aboard to CRMN Fahad Far!
- 03/12: Welcome aboard to CRMN Martin Peterson!
- The following crewmembers are reminded that their memberships are now APPROACHING expiration date, and that they should renew NOW:

SCC	RANK	NAME	EXPIRE DT
70978	LTJG	Rianna Melton	04/26/2016

Second Officer's  
Report  
By Lieutenant John  
"Sparky" Bevan



Greetings,  
one and all! I have nothing to  
report this month, so we'll keep  
this short. Have a great month!

APRIL FOOLS!

As everyone knows, I am  
never at a loss for words, so not  
having anything to report? Yeah,  
that'll never happen! ☺

Project: Topeka Shuttle

Well, one and all, we are  
back on track with forming a  
chapter in Topeka. The temporary  
name selected by the new CO  
(Ensign Selena Juarez) and XO  
(Crewman Nikki Blackburn) is the  
USS Washburn. The chapter is  
not yet officially registered with  
SFI as there is still some  
paperwork to complete, so anyone  
who is not yet a member of the  
Dark Phoenix in anticipation of  
transferring to the Washburn,  
please go into the SFI database  
and change your ship to the USS  
Dark Phoenix. This will allow us  
to keep you updated with the  
development of the shuttle.

Crew Changes

Last month, I told you  
about Ensign Josh Levering  
transferring away due to work.  
This month, I must tell you that  
another of our number is  
transferring away: Lieutenant

(junior grade) John Buttimer,  
Sergeant in the real world US  
Army, has received orders that he  
must transfer to southern Indiana  
in May. Originally he was to  
transfer sooner than that but he got  
the transfer deferred due to his  
wife Shelby expecting to deliver  
their baby soon. He has stated,  
however, that he will be back to  
visit occasionally since the in-laws  
are here and the wife will want to  
see her parents periodically. He  
shall be reassigned to another  
Army unit and therefore to another  
ship (the USS Drakonia in  
Louisville, Kentucky, under the  
command of Captain Tim Hellers)  
but he shall be an honored guest  
when he returns for his visits.

While we see two of our  
crew depart in their family  
shuttles, we also welcome aboard  
a couple new people. First, we  
have Crewman Fahad al-Faryyan  
who previously considered being  
the CO of the Topeka shuttle but  
decided that his schedule did not  
permit the commitment he wished  
to give to the ship if he assumed  
that role. As the Topeka chapter  
has not yet been officially formed,  
he has joined our crew with the  
anticipation of transferring to the  
USS Washburn when it launches  
from our shuttle bay doors.

Second, we welcome  
Crewman Martin "Kodi" Peterson  
to our midst. He is familiar to  
those of us who worked TopCon  
as we worked closely with him in  
the Security realm. He also has  
joined us in anticipation of the  
USS Washburn launching.

Welcome aboard,  
Crewmen al-Faryyan and  
Peterson!

Promotions

This month, we have five  
promotions to report, three of  
which are in the same family!

As has become standard  
policy for our ship, once a person  
passes Officer Command College,  
he is eligible for a promotion as  
part of the current graduating class  
from the next Academy Night. In  
the traditional track, he would be  
promoted from Ensign to  
Lieutenant (junior grade) and that  
is precisely what both Ensigns  
Laura Felty and Rezty Felty  
earned. They started their OCC  
examinations after our Fall  
Academy Night back in  
September since they were not  
members until two weeks after the  
event. Therefore, they became  
members of the Spring Academy  
Night graduating class and as such  
received their promotions as of the  
date of that event, specifically  
March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Additionally, our Acting  
Chief Engineer Cadet Ensign  
Dyson Felty earned his promotion  
to Cadet Lieutenant (junior grade)  
because of passing OCC and being  
a member of the same Spring  
Academy Night graduating class.

Separate from the Felty  
family, Crewman al-Faryyan has  
taken and passed Officer Training

School and therefore has earned his commission as an Ensign.

Also, we have another Crewman who has passed OTS: Crewman Martin Peterson. As such, he is also promoted to the rank of Ensign.

Congratulations,  
Lieutenants Felty, Cadet  
Lieutenant Felty, and Ensigns al-  
Faryyan and Peterson!

Crew Handbook

With the changes we have had recently with so many Cadets coming aboard our ship, the Command Staff felt it was time to update the Crew Handbook. Besides some sections being misnamed (such as the section labelled Active and Inactive Members that had nothing in the paragraphs that followed which actually addressed that issue), we decided that we should codify certain issues such as Cadet ranks.

We have divided up the Cadets into three age groups for the purposes of rank. Specifically, we will have Primary Cadets for those Cadets under the age of 10, Junior Cadets for ages 10 through 13 (roughly junior high/middle school age), and Senior Cadets for ages 14 through 17 (roughly high school age). The Primary Cadets will receive no rank insignia while the Junior Cadets will receive brass lozenges and Senior Cadets will receive silver lozenges.

We shall still have Cadet Officers for those who take the

adult version of Officer Training School and beyond. A Cadet of any age may take OTS (with the approval of the parents and the Command Staff, of course) and so any age of Cadet may become a Cadet Officer. Cadet Officers will have rank insignia inspired by the Maquis provisional ranks as seen in Star Trek Voyager, as mentioned in last month's SO's Report.

Also, we have added Special Operations in Section 3.6 regarding the various departments aboard the ship. As they can be called upon to provide security services, the sections for the Security Department and the Marines have been updated as well.

In Section 4, we have added language to codify the policy we have implemented since our first Academy Night, which is that when someone passes Officer Command College, he is eligible to be advanced in rank by one grade (typically from Ensign to Lieutenant (junior grade)) as of the date of the appropriate graduating class based on when he started taking his OCC.

In Section 5, we have made several changes regarding the awards. First, we have added stipulations that nominations must be made by active SFI members and those nominated must also be active SFI members.

Second, we have modified the Junior Cadet of the Year award

age range to cover both Primary and Junior Cadets (though the name of the award remains the same). As such, rather than being ages 6 through 12 that qualify for this award, it is now 6 through 13. This also means that the Senior Cadet of the Year award age range is slightly shortened to just ages 14 through 17.

Third, we have added some new awards to the mix. We now have Yeoman Janice Rand and Energizer Bunny Awards as annual awards and the Captain Dennis Bain Award as a discretionary award.

The Yeoman Janice Rand Award is available to a crewmember who is most helpful to a member of the Senior Staff. This is available to any enlisted or officer rank (sorry, this excludes Cadets and Cadet Officers). Also, the Senior Staff themselves are ineligible for this award, so that means that the Command Staff and Lieutenants (junior grade) Laura Felty (Chief Medical Officer), Rezty Felty (Chief Security Officer), and Carolyn Kaberline (Acting Chief Science Officer) are not able to receive this award.

The Energizer Bunny Award is for the crewmember who has been most active in regard to attendance at ship meetings, chapter/Region/Fleet activities, events at which the Dark Phoenix has worked or had a recruiting table, etc.

The Captain Dennis Bain Award is commemorative of our good friend serving aboard his new ship in the next dimension of our universe, Captain Dennis Berl Bain. During his time with us, he was very active not only in SFI but also in a multitude of other roleplay, cosplay, LARP, and other such groups. So, in his honor, we have created this award to recognize those who also show the same fun-loving spirit that he always shared with others. Unlike most other awards, this may be awarded to multiple recipients either at the same time or throughout the calendar year. Only one Captain Dennis Bain Award may be presented to each recipient during a single calendar year.

The handbook is still being updated and, thanks to some suggestions and assistance from our sister ship, the Heimdal (Region 1, Virginia), there may be some additional information within it as well by the time this revision is completed. We hope to have the new edition ready for distribution by the time of the April meeting. We will also, of course, make the PDF available to anyone for download when the updates are complete.

### Ship IDs

As I write this article on March 29<sup>th</sup> in the middle of the night, I have received word from our ID printer that the cards have been shipped out and we should have them by the end of this week.

(Given that the printer is in Springfield, Missouri, I expect to have them on Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup>.) If there is anyone who did not get the chance to order an ID card in this shipment but would still like to purchase one, the price will be \$6 (including shipping). Get in touch with me and we will arrange a time to get your picture taken with the appropriate color of background as well as get your medical information (as much as you wish to volunteer, if any) for the back of the ID card.

Those who did order cards, I will have them with me at our various events (e.g. Game Nights, Farpoint Observatory Away Mission, etc.) until such time that we have all the cards distributed. This initial order of cards has a price of \$4 per card ordered. I can accept either cash or check but not plastic.

It seems that our cards are becoming popular. Our friends aboard the Constellation (R12, Illinois) saw the proof of my card that I put up on their Facebook page at the request of their CO (of course I deleted my medical data off the back of the card before posting it) and they are very interested in ordering IDs for their ship. Further, I have heard from Captain Gail Lindbloom, the CO of the Oklahoma (R12, Oklahoma - predictably enough, right?) that she is very interested in getting such cards made for her crew. In fact, as I spoke with the ID printer a little earlier today, he indicated that Captain Lindbloom had

already contacted him and is making arrangements to take their order soon using the template he created for us. So, as we did with our ship uniforms a year ago, we have struck another chord with our fellow ships regarding ship IDs. The Dark Phoenix is getting to be well-known for its great ideas. Thank you, our wonderful crew! ☺

### Cadet Surgery

As those of us at the last ship meeting are aware, our Cadet Tesla Felty will be having surgery on her back in the middle of April to help correct the curvature of her back. To accomplish this, the surgeons will be reconstructing her back using cadaver bone. As Tesla likes to say, "[she] will have a dead body in [her]." Though this is routine and is of relatively low risk, let's all keep her in our thoughts and send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery from the experience. Tesla, we are all here rooting for you and look forward to your return to active duty. ☺

### Events

Our Friday Night Game Nights continue to be a hit. On March 18<sup>th</sup>'s Game Night, we had Lieutenant Brent Barbee; Lieutenants (junior grade) Laura Felty, Rezty Felty, Rianna Melton, and Jeremy Schroeder; Cadet Lieutenant (junior grade) Dyson Felty; Cadets Sagan Felty and Tesla Felty; and guest Tim Burns (a friend of Lieutenant Melton

whom we hope will soon join our crew). We all played Artemis and, just like we have found with the others who have joined us, they really had a blast with it! Various people took turns being the Captain and we got to see the different command styles of each: some are much more aggressive than others...but at least no one blew up the ship by running into mines. ☺

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, our CO, Rear Admiral Ralph Planthold, and I attended the Sunday Funday event hosted by our Ensigns Reuben Juarez and Selena Juarez and Crewman Nikki Blackburn. On the agenda of things to discuss at the Sunday Funday was "Starfleet Topeka," so we thought it would be a good idea for us to be there to answer questions and give guidance where desired or needed. We--including Admiral Sunnie Planthold--ended up having dinner with the aforementioned three crewmembers as well as a fellow SFI member who is not yet affiliated with a ship, Brian Cervantez. It was this day that Selena and Nikki officially declared their desire to form the Topeka chapter under their command. It was also at this time that the temporary name of USS Washburn was selected for the shuttle.

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, the CO and I attended the fund-raising event AfterGlow II in support of TopCon. While there, since many of those who attend Sunday

Funday also make it here, we were able to speak with several people about the Topeka shuttle once again.

The next day was the monthly ship meeting, this time held at Conroy's Pub. Attendance was a bit lighter than usual: the Command Staff; Lieutenants (junior grade) Laura Felty, Rezty Felty, Carolyn Kaberline, and Rianna Melton; Ensign Fahad al-Faryyan; Cadet Lieutenant (junior grade) Dyson Felty; and Cadets Sagan Felty and Tesla Felty were present. At this time, the Lieutenants Felty, Cadet Lieutenant Felty, and Ensign al-Faryyan received their promotions. Also, Admiral Sunnie Planthold received her Fleet Award of the Order of Roddenberry Second Class and Lieutenant Bevan received his Fleet Award of the Order of Darmok and Jalad Second Class. Both of these awards were approved back on Christmas Day but arrived in the mail for presentation two months later, just a day or two after the February ship meeting.

After the meeting, all but Lieutenant Kaberline reconvened at my home for another round of Artemis with Ensign al-Faryyan being exposed to it for the first time. Just before he left for the evening, we all convinced him to assume the big chair and issue the commands to the crew. He enjoyed the game when working the consoles but got even more of a kick out of it when he was the

one issuing the orders. Being so enthusiastic, he stated that he was definitely going to encourage the folks in Topeka to check into it so that we could have another group of people with whom to play. (I look forward to lining up a time when we can play with a second ship, maybe more than that, so we can expand what we do in the game greatly.)

April 1<sup>st</sup> was our next Game Night and the usual group of the Lieutenants (junior grade) Laura and Rezty Felty, Cadet Lieutenant (junior grade) Dyson Felty, and Cadets Sagan and Tesla Felty attended along with Lieutenant (junior grade) KLaR Batt (whom we were glad to have join us once again) and guests of the Lieutenants Felty named Mary Crosson and David Nicol along with their 2-year old daughter. We played Artemis in various scenarios and with different people taking turns. This time, however, there was a mutiny as the crew declared Cadet Sagan Felty unfit for command when he intentionally tried to put us into a black hole not only once but twice so as to try to destroy the ship. Lieutenant Batt was the first to defy our Cadet Captain, joined quickly thereafter by me, then all others on the bridge crew joined us. We defeated the enemies in the scenario and avoided dying in the black hole whether accidentally or intentionally. ☺

April 9<sup>th</sup> was the most recent Northeast Kansas Amateur Astronomer's League (NEKAAL)

Open House at Farpoint Observatory. Attendance was quite high. From the Dark Phoenix, we had the Command Staff, Lieutenants (junior grade) K Lar Batt and Carolyn Kaberline (who also is one of the NEKAAL board members and was there in that capacity), and Cadet Hannah Batt but there also lots of other people who were unaffiliated with SFI who came there to see all the heavenly sights. Unfortunately the high school next door was having their prom, so their lights were detracting from our ability to see many of the more faint objects but we still got to see many things, even a satellite streaking across the sky. The next Open House should be better.

Our next Game Night is April 15<sup>th</sup>, Tax Day and the date that this newsletter is supposed to be published. As such, I am working hard to get it pushed out the door early this month. If all goes well, I should get it out either on April 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>.

Upcoming events include the Ship Meeting on Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, to be held at Perkins at the usual time of 6pm; the Star Trek Concert at the Topeka Performing Arts Center on Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, at 3pm; and Game Nights at my home on April 29<sup>th</sup> and May 13<sup>th</sup>. More details about the Concert are available on the Dark Phoenix Facebook page, so please refer there for details and directions to the venue.

As always, if anyone has any questions about the contents of this article, suggestions for future events, or wish to submit articles or announcements for publication, please feel free to contact me by email at [sosparky@bdcusa.com](mailto:sosparky@bdcusa.com) or give me a call at (785) 727-1355. Be aware this is a regular phone, so don't try to send it text messages. ☺

*John Bevan is the Second Officer of the USS Dark Phoenix and has been a member of Starfleet International since January 2015. When not honoring our ship with his dedication, he owns and operates a computer sales and service firm he founded back in June 1989. The motto by which he lives is "Nothing changes until something changes."*

STARFLEET Marine Corps  
Unit Report Form v3

Date and time submitted: Fri  
Apr 1 2016  
15:12:50 PDT

Unit: MSG 269  
Battalion: 3  
Brigade: 12  
Reporting month: April

**\*\*REPORTING OFFICER\*\***  
Reporting officer: ADM Sun-  
nie J Planthold  
E-mail:sunniejap@bdcusa.com

**\*\*BASIC UNIT  
INFORMATION\*\***  
Type: MSG  
Branch: Special Ops  
Nickname: The Black Bettys  
Motto:

**\*\*OFFICER-IN-CHARGE  
INFORMATION\*\***  
Unit OIC  
name and rank: ADM Sun-  
nie J Planthold  
e-mail: sunniejap@bdcusa.com  
phone: 813-244-9666  
Private: Yes  
Unit DOIC  
name and rank: COL Pat-  
rick Malone  
e-mail: cowboypm@gmail.com  
phone: 816-721-2492  
Private: Yes

**\*\*CHAPTER DATA\*\***  
NCC Number: 74920  
Name: USS Dark Phoenix  
CO: RADM Ralph F Planthold

**\*\*UNIT PERSONNEL DATA\*\***

Unit strength: Active/Reserve:  
1/2

Unit roster:  
Name: Sunnie J Planthold  
Rank: ADM  
SCC Number: 44342  
Active/Reserve: Reserve  
Expiration Date: 04/13/2017

Name: Patrick Malone  
Rank: COL  
SCC Number: 46072  
Active/Reserve: Active  
Expiration Date: 06/22/2016

Name: Morgan Hahn  
Rank: CAPT  
SCC Number: 32367  
Active/Reserve: Reserve  
Expiration Date: 03/15/2017

Changes to roster:  
Recruits/Discharges: 0/0

Changes in leadership:  
Type the changes to Strike  
Group/Battalion leadership here.  
N/A

Awards issued:  
Type award name and recipient.

Awards requested:  
Type award and nominee.

**\*\*UNIT MISSION DATA\*\***  
Unit activities:  
SUMMARIZE BDE, BN, and unit  
activities for the past 60 days.

Volunteered hair care for clients at  
local Hospice.  
Donated items of clothing to the  
Willow Domestic Violence Cen-  
ter.

Contributing monthly article to  
chapter newsletter.  
SFMC Challenge Data:  
Please place any data regarding  
SFMC challenges here. Please list  
BDE, BN, and unit.

**\*\*COMMENTS/PROBLEMS/SU  
GGESTIONS\*\***  
Comments/Problems/Suggestions:  
N/A

Actions taken to rectify: N/A

Security Officer's  
Report  
By Lieutenant  
(Junior Grade)  
Rezty Felty



Weapons, Part 1

All Starfleet personnel should have a basic familiarity with weapons and be able to demonstrate weapons proficiency unless they have a moral objection to the use of weapons for defense. Our mission is to explore and interact in a positive manner with other species but others do not always desire positive interaction and at times you may be called upon to defend yourself, your crew, or your ship. This month, I will cover the basic types of projectile firearms in common use on 21<sup>st</sup> century Earth, how they work, what the different types are, and good techniques for use. I will also add a short questionnaire to the end of the report. If you have no moral objection to the use of weapons, I ask that you please provide me with your answers to the questionnaire so I may assess crew defense readiness and proficiency and gauge need and interest in future away missions to train and qualify on weapons. I plan to cover rifles and shotguns next month with future features that may include automatic weapons, phasers of all different types, disruptors, energy whips, or other weapons commonly in use in our quadrant that you may encounter while exploring the galaxy.

Projectile firearms designed for single hand use, commonly referred to as "handguns," come in a variety of types from derringers to single-shot weapons, muzzleloaders, and hand cannons. However, the two main types in common use on 21<sup>st</sup> century Earth were pistols and revolvers.

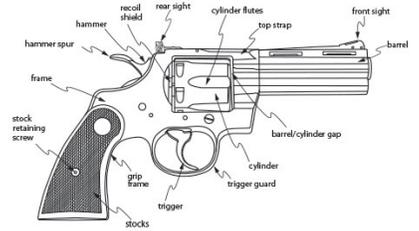
Revolvers



Though a variety of handheld weapon types were developed from sometime before the 14<sup>th</sup> century, including hand cannons, muzzleloaders, flintlocks, wheellocks, and pepperboxes, the first practical hand held weapon that allowed the user to fire rapidly without reloading was the revolver, first put into mass-production by Samuel Colt in 1835. Although there were earlier revolvers, they used flintlocks or percussion caps, and were hand-crafted one-of-a-kind weapons. Colt's revolver was mass-produced and designed to use primer caps, making it the first modern revolver.

But those of you unfamiliar with gunpowder projectile weapons may be wondering, what is a revolver? The simplest definition is that a revolver is a handheld weapon that

uses a revolving cylinder to sequentially line up pre-loaded ammunition in a chamber with the barrel and the firing pin, often a "hammer" on these weapons.



In the diagram above, you can see the parts of a revolver. The bullets are loaded into the cylinder, the hammer is cocked, and the trigger releases the hammer. The hammer has a sharp point or pin on it that strikes the primer cap and ignites the gunpowder in the bullet, propelling the bullet out of the chamber of the cylinder, through the barrel, and hopefully at the target. Single-action revolvers have to be cocked by pulling the hammer back with the thumb; double action revolvers have a mechanism which cocks the hammer when you pull the trigger, and then immediately releases it. You aim by lining up the front and rear sights on your target. Both types of action use the cocking of the hammer to mechanically index, or advance, the cylinder, lining up the next bullet to be fired.

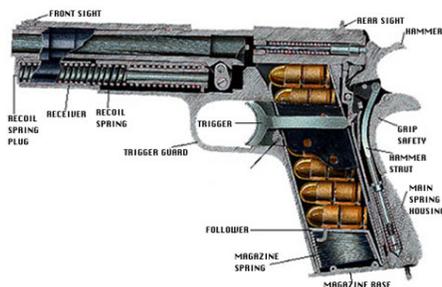
Of the two--pistol and revolver--the revolver is a more primitive weapon. Revolvers do not have separate safety catches, considered to be "safe" as long as they are not cocked. Revolvers

require you to manually unload the spent shell casings, the brass cylinder that held the gunpowder and projectile before firing.

Pistols (Also known as semi-automatic or self-loading pistols)



A pistol has a single chamber in line with the barrel and the hammer. Rounds are fed, usually from below, into this chamber by a spring-loaded magazine. Pistols generally do have a safety switch, which prevents firing, locking the trigger and the hammer. Once loaded, a pistol has to be cocked and have a bullet fed into the chamber by sliding the top frame (known as the slide) back. After the initial load, the gun cocks itself and feeds a fresh round into the chamber every time you fire by using some of the exhaust gases of the bullet to push the slide back automatically. This also ejects the spent shell. It is important, when firing a pistol for the first time, to be aware of where the slide will go when firing. Many have injured themselves when the slide came back during firing and grabbed the web between their thumb and forefinger, or the thumb itself, depending on how they were gripping the weapon.



The basic parts of a pistol are shown above. Aiming is the same as with a revolver: line up the front and rear sights on the target. Bear in mind, the descriptions of the mechanisms of both the revolver and the pistol given here are general and common; you may know someone who has a pistol fed by a stripper clip instead of a magazine but most 21<sup>st</sup> century Terran handguns will conform to the descriptions given here.

### Safety & Technique

First and foremost, always, always, ALWAYS, remember that a handgun is a lethal weapon that, if misused, can kill you or others regardless of your intentions. Always assume a weapon is loaded, even if the magazine is out and lying on the table in front of you. One round may well still be in the chamber. Assuming that the weapon is loaded and may go off at any time will avoid 90 percent of the misfortunes one may have with a weapon. Assume anything that looks weapon like is a weapon and treat it as such. It doesn't matter if it looks like a toy and your kid said he got it at the 5 & dime; assume it is real. There are weapons that look like toys and

assuming all weapons are real will avoid mishaps. See the picture below for a prime example. This is a real Glock pistol which will kill you and it looks very similar to a toy Nintendo gun.



Never point a weapon at another lifeform unless you intend to kill it. Remember, we are assuming all weapons are real and loaded, right? So there is no reason to point a weapon at another living thing unless you aim to put a large bleeding hole in it. Yes, one may defend himself by pointing a weapon at an aggressor but if you do, the situation had better be serious enough that the possibility of you having to kill that aggressor exists. These very basic safety rules will allow you to own and use a handgun without undue risk. If we pursue an away mission to a range for training, I will show you additional safety rules that apply to ranges or any place where you have a large number of armed people gathering.

Knowing how a weapon works, what its parts are, and how they function is half the education you need for weapons proficiency. The other half is learning good handling technique and proper care procedures for your weapon.

First, how do you hold your weapon? There are a variety of grips and stances one may use but the most commonly accepted for accurate use of a handgun is what is known as the Weaver stance.



In the Weaver stance, you stand in a "boxing" stance: knees slightly bent while you are turned at a slight angle to your target. Your left foot is forward and your right foot is angled out at about 45 degrees. You lean slightly forward with your weight on your left foot. Your right arm is straight while your left arm is bent at the elbow. Your right hand grips the weapon with your pinky, ring, middle finger, and thumb wrapped around the grip and your index finger on or beside the trigger. You wrap your left hand around your right hand, and sight down the barrel, lining up your sights on the target. When you have the target in your sights, you release the safety, take a deep breath, release it halfway, and hold your remaining breath to avoid jiggling the gun. When the sights are steady and settled on the target, you gently squeeze the trigger, never jerk it, as this will move the weapon and take it off target. (Reverse these directions if you are a left-handed shooter.)

After firing, if you have hit your target and achieved your goal, put the weapon safety back on before laying it down. The safety on some weapons is difficult to reach for left-handed shooters; you may need to use a left-handed weapon or develop your own techniques.

There are other stances; squatting with your elbows on your knees makes for a much steadier weapon and if you have the time to assume a prone position, lying down with your weight on your elbows gives the steadiest shooting platform of all. It is important to note that performing these actions takes practice, and some of it feels unnatural, particularly the way you cock your bent elbow with the Weaver stance. That is why it is important to spend time at the range practicing and qualifying on your weapon. If you are ever in a life-threatening situation and have to use a weapon, you want these actions to be second nature. When I was weapon-training my Cadets as young children, if they forgot to put the safety back on after firing, I would make them jog around the block. They didn't forget too many times before putting the safety on became an automatic action they performed without thought!

If you want your weapon to serve you well, fire when you need it to fire, and not jam at the worst possible moment, you need to know how to care for it. Most weapons are very reliable, and as long as you keep them dry and

clean, will function as expected for decades. One of the obvious things to do is to avoid exposing your weapon to water if possible. If it does get wet, make sure to clean and oil it as soon as possible. You should get in the habit of cleaning your weapon after each use. Not after every single time you fire it, but if you spend a day at the range, or out hunting, when you get home, before you put your weapon away (preferably locked in an area inaccessible to children without weapons training), make the time to clean it.

Before you start cleaning, remember our safety rules: ALWAYS assume the weapon is loaded. Many gun accidents occur when owners are cleaning their weapons! A basic gun cleaning kit will contain gun oil, some swatches of cloth, and a rod to go down the barrel. First remove any rounds, either in the cylinder if cleaning a revolver or by removing the magazine of a pistol. You can check a revolver by looking through the chambers while rotating the cylinder from the rear! Never check your weapon by aiming it at yourself. After removing the magazine from a pistol, work the slide and this should eject any round in the chamber. You may check a pistol by looking in the chamber to see if you see light through the barrel from the rear! Again, never look down the barrel of any weapon from the front or aim it at yourself. Remove any obvious dirt or grime, dry the weapon if necessary, and then lightly wipe down with gun

oil. You don't want it dripping with oil, as this will attract dirt, just lightly coated to avoid rust and repel water. Drip some gun oil on a swatch, and attach it to your cleaning rod, then work it down the barrel to clean it, sliding it in and out while twisting to clean the inside of the barrel. Do not point the weapon at yourself while doing this, you may need to have part of your hand in front of the barrel while cleaning, but a wound in your hand is survivable; one in the head usually isn't. That's all it takes to clean and care for your weapon so it will continue to provide you with years of safe reliable service.

That concludes my coverage of the basic mechanisms, safety, and techniques of 21<sup>st</sup> century Terran handguns. I urge all crew members to take some time to answer the questions on that follows and send their answers to me either via email at [Rezty@KC-Felty.net](mailto:Rezty@KC-Felty.net) or by bringing me a printout at the next ship's meeting. Until next month, keep your photon tubes loaded, and watch your six!

*Rezty Felty insures the safety and security of the USS Dark Phoenix and engages in Warp Core research, has been a Trek fan since the '60s, and has been a member of Starfleet since September 2015. In real life, he is owned by the CMO of the USS Dark Phoenix, 5 kids, and a variety of dogs, cats, and rats when not performing Linux Engineering.*

Weapons Proficiency  
Questionnaire

Name:

Date:

1. Hunting Experience:  
When, where, how long?

Hunter Safety Course?

2. Military Experience  
Branch:

MOS:

3. Police/Armed Security  
Experience  
When, where, how long?

4. Other Weapons Experience?

5. Have you received classroom  
marksmanship training? Y/N

If so, how many hours and on  
which weapons?

6. Have you held a position in the  
past where job retention depended  
upon your consistent weapons  
ability? Y/N

If so, list weapons qualified on:

7. Weapons Instructor Experience  
Y/N

When, where, and subjects:

8. Do you own any weapons?  
Y/N

If so, please list those weapons:

9. Any other pertinent  
information?

Chief Engineer's  
Report  
By Cadet  
Lieutenant  
(Junior Grade)  
Dyson Felty



My report is complementary to the Chief Security Officer Rezty Felty's report. It discusses the construction of 21st-Century Phasers. For the enclosure, you can make one or you can buy and disassemble a toy Phaser. For the laser itself, you can buy a high-power laser pointer or you can use a powerful blu-ray disc-reader's laser. I can't find a guide on how to build it\*\* but this article published on Geek.com may help you.

Homemade Star Trek Phaser  
Really Will Stun You  
By Matthew Humphries,  
Geek.com

Work is already underway to create a working Tricorder (for information, please read the article found at <http://www.geek.com/geek-cetera/canadian-phd-builds-a-working-tricorder-1479641/>) but what about the phasers they use in Star Trek? Well, one guy working in his garage has taken the first steps towards creating one and it does class as a legitimate weapon.

The video found at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuuL\\_Tel79g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuuL_Tel79g) shows what looks to be a homemade phaser constructed by combining a classic

Star Trek phaser casing (as found in this toy phaser available through Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Original-Series-Black-Handle-Phaser/dp/B000GPWNWM>) with a laser unit. Based on the video below, it looks likely to be the laser module from a PlayStation 3 Blu-ray drive, although there are a number of high power laser pointers that would achieve similar results.

You may also notice a smoke machine in the background of the video. That allows us the viewer to get all excited by actually seeing the laser on film. The balloon popping just confirms this could cause someone pain and very easily blind them. And the sound the phaser makes? It could be added to the video or the guy may have rigged up something inside the phaser casing to output the audio when the trigger is pressed.

As you can see, the build isn't exactly straightforward, and while it costs under \$100 to build, that's still a substantial payout for what is effectively a toy mod.\* Still, at the very least it's going to confuse anyone you confront--probably more so if you're wearing the correct attire.

I think I'll give this do-it-yourself phaser a miss though and instead wait for a professional version that actually has different settings including the ability to strike multiple targets as well as

act as a welding torch or to cut through metal.

\*Chief of Security 1st note: As the article states, this modification creates a working phaser that can burn skin and can permanently blind someone if fired into the eye, so I would hardly classify it as a toy or a toy mod!

\*\*Chief of Security 2nd note: A step-by-step guide on building a working phaser may be found at <http://laserpointerforums.com/f51/tutorial-12x-star-trek-phasers-mod-46886.html>. I plan to see if we have enough interest amongst the crew for me to do a hands-on build session for anyone who wants to create their own working phaser at some point in the near future.

[Source:  
<http://www.geek.com/geek-cetera/homemade-star-trek-phasers-really-will-stun-you-1486175/>]

*Dyson Felty is the Acting Chief Engineer of the Dark Phoenix and is an exception to the rule of only Officers being in such responsible positions. He is a high school sophomore but has shown the same enthusiasm and dedication of any of the Officers, so his desire to serve has been approved by the Command Staff. Joining the crew only a few months ago, he has proven himself worthy of his title. As he challenges the same Officer training tests as his adult colleagues, he has been granted the rank of Cadet Lieutenant (Junior Grade) (abbreviated as*

*CDT3C) and will receive a commission to the rank of Ensign upon his 18th birthday.*

Chief Medical  
Officer's Report  
By Lieutenant  
(Junior Grade)  
Laura Felty,  
SFMD



Did you know that changing your cat's litter could be risky business? It is advised that pregnant women stay away from cat litter or changing cat litter while expecting. They run the risk of toxoplasmosis. But recently there is more information regarding Toxoplasmosis. The following article published at the ScientificAmerican.com website explains.

Rage Disorder Linked with  
Parasite Found in Cat Feces  
By Christopher Wanjek,  
LiveScience.com

Uncontrollable, explosive bouts of anger such a road rage might be the result of an earlier brain infection from the toxoplasmosis parasite, an organism found in cat feces, a new study finds.

In the study of more than 350 adults, those with a psychiatric disorder called Intermittent Explosive Disorder, or IED, were twice as likely to have been infected by the toxoplasmosis parasite compared with healthy individuals with no psychiatric diagnosis. (For more information about IED, please go to <http://www.livescience.com/9978-rage-mental-disorder.html>)

The study adds to a growing body of evidence suggesting that toxoplasmosis — usually a mild or nonsymptomatic infection from a protozoan parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii* — may somehow alter people's brain chemistry to cause long-term behavior problems. Previous studies have linked toxoplasmosis to schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, impulsivity, and suicidal behavior.

The researchers stressed, however, that they merely have identified an association between toxoplasmosis and rage, and cannot say that toxoplasmosis causes rage — or that people should get rid of their cats, for that matter.

"Not everyone that tests positive for toxoplasmosis will have aggression issues," said Dr. Emil Coccaro, a professor and chairman of psychiatry and behavioral neuroscience at the University of Chicago, who led the study. But exposure to the parasite does appear to "raise the risk for aggressive behavior," and more research is needed to determine whether the link is causal, and what, if any, the underlying biological mechanism may be, he said.

The study was published today (March 23) in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

More than 20 percent of the U.S. population has been infected by the *Toxoplasma* parasite, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Cats are the only known host in which this parasite reproduces; cats shed the parasites' eggs, called oocysts, in their feces. Humans can become infected after unintentionally ingesting the microscopic oocysts, primarily from not their washing hands after cleaning a cat's litter box or working in a garden with contaminated soil. Other sources of *Toxoplasma* are undercooked meat or unwashed vegetables that have been contaminated.

*Toxoplasma* can cause severe neurological problems and death in infants infected through their mothers during pregnancy, which is why pregnant women are advised not to change a cat's litter box.

Coccaro told Live Science he was intrigued by the body of scientific literature linking toxoplasmosis with psychiatric disorders. For this study, his research team recruited 358 adults. About one-third had IED, defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as recurrent, impulsive, problematic outbursts of verbal or physical aggression disproportionate to the situations that trigger them. Another one-third was individuals diagnosed with another psychiatric disorder (not IED). And the remaining third was healthy controls with no psychiatric history.

The research team found that 22 percent of the people with IED tested positive for toxoplasmosis exposure, compared with only 9

percent of the healthy control group. About 16 percent of the group with other psychiatric disorders tested positive for toxoplasmosis, too.

Jaroslav Flegr, a professor of biology at Charles University in Prague in the Czech Republic who was not involved in the study, said this was a confirmation of observations made by his research team over the last two decades.

"We have found that prevalence of toxoplasmosis correlates positively with violence-associated injuries and mortality in particular countries," said Flegr, who was among the first to propose that *Toxoplasma* can alter the brain. "It correlates also with diseases burden associated with bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and epilepsy.

All the researchers were at a loss, however, to explain how the infection could be tied to behavior.

"We don't yet understand the mechanisms involved," said Dr. Royce Lee, also of the University of Chicago, a co-author on the report. "It could be an increased inflammatory response, direct brain modulation by the parasite, or even reverse causation where aggressive individuals tend to have more cats or eat more undercooked meat." (To read more about the potential link to an inflammation, please go to <http://www.livescience.com/42075-anger-disorders-linked-to-inflammation.html>)

Coccaro said that inflammation is a leading theory. Toxoplasmosis triggers the body to create antibodies, which are proteins that recognize specific pathogens and initiate the natural inflammation process to fight infections. After being ingested, *Toxoplasma* can travel to the muscles and the brain. In the brain, *Toxoplasma* can hide inside cells, and trigger an inflammatory response that damages nerve cells as the immune system attempts to kill the *Toxoplasma*.

One of the limits of the study, he said, was that his team could only assess the presence of antibodies in a blood sample, not a brain fluid sample. Future research may reveal the presence of *Toxoplasma* in the brain of those with IED, which could point in the direction of causation.

Or, conversely, doctors could treat IED patients for *Toxoplasma* infection to see if their symptoms reverse, Coccaro said.

[Source: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/rage-disorder-linked-with-parasite-found-in-cat-feces/>]

*Laura Felty doesn't just play in the medical field in SFI: she has been employed in the nursing field for over 30 years and works as a Registered Nurse. She and her husband Rezty have five children and three grandchildren.*

Veterinary Specialist's  
Report  
By LTJG Rianna  
Melton



### What to do if you find stray kittens?

Hello Spring, and hello kitten season! The turning of the weather marks the beginning of many things but for those in the pet health industry, it means we are soon inundated with baby kittens.

Those tiny kittens sure are cute aren't they? Maybe you've found a litter of feral kittens in the past or maybe you'll come across some in the future. But what should one do with those helpless little ones? How do you know when to step in or when to leave them be?

If you do find a litter that is not in immediate danger from their environment (dangerous location, nearby predators, approaching rainstorm, etc.), it is best to observe the area from a distance for 1-4 hours to see if the mother returns. She may be away hunting at the time or staying away if she knows humans are around. If she does not return, then they should be taken into care.

Very young and neonatal kittens (0-6 weeks) are especially vulnerable and require constant around-the-clock care and their condition can deteriorate very

rapidly if they are ill or not getting frequent feedings. Unless you are familiar with how to care for young kittens, they should be taken to a facility equipped to handle them. Unfortunately there are so many kittens taken into shelters right now that many have to make the difficult decision on what to do with them. Many shelters have limited neonatal foster programs that are able to properly care for so many high-care kittens. There are some vet clinics that have staff that can help but please call around to find a place that can give them the care they deserve!

I know this seems like a grim outcome but I encourage you to try and help versus leaving the young kittens to fend for themselves. Unless they are old enough (7+ months) they have a very slim chance of survival and could potentially have a very short and difficult life.

If you think you want to take them in and try and raise them yourself,

#### **PLEASE CONTACT YOUR VET FOR PROPER INSTRUCTION ON CARE!**

Very young kittens are very challenging to raise and there are NUMEROUS details you MUST know to give them the best chance at survival.

#### **DO NOT RELY UPON DR. GOOGLE FOR KITTEN CARE!**

Of course the best course of action is preventative. There are MILLIONS of cats and dogs euthanized at shelters every year for the simple truth that there are too many. Spaying or neutering your pet will prevent unwanted litters and is actually advantageous for your pet's health as it reduces the chance of many cancers and diseases. Many humane societies also participate in trap-and-release programs to fix stray cats. They always appreciate help and donations and, if you are interested, you may also consider volunteering as a way to help out!

And what's an article on kittens without a cute kitten video?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-21iYoe7cI4>

*Rianna Melton is a member of SFI since June 2013 and is a former veterinary assistant who now works in the capacity of installation and maintenance field technician of veterinary diagnostic equipment. In her free time, she is mother to two dogs and two cats. One word of warning: under the human skin beats the heart of a proud Klingon warrior!*

Astronomer's  
Report  
By LTJG  
Carolyn  
Kaberline



Celestial happenings are still a little limited this month but there are several events to enjoy.

The first heavenly object to look for is the planet Mercury. Mercury will be about 20 degrees away from the moon on April 18, so if the skies are clear, you should be able to see it low in the western sky just after sunset.

Another event to watch for is the Lyrids Meteor Shower. Not as spectacular as some meteor showers, it should still bring an average of 20 meteors per hour at its peak. This particular shower is produced by dust particles left behind by comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher which was discovered in 1861. This shower occurs every year between April 16-25 with its peak occurring on the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup> this year. The interesting thing about this shower is that its meteors often produce bright dust trails that last for several seconds after their passing. However, since the moon will be full on April 22, only the brightest meteors and trails will probably be visible. However, if you can find a nice dark spot a few meteors should still be visible after midnight. Most of the meteors will appear to come from the constellation Lyra but may be found anywhere in the sky.

Speaking of the April full moon, this particular moon was referred to as the Full Pink Moon by some Native American tribes as it came at the same time as the moss pink, or wild ground phlox, one of the first wild flowers to appear in the spring. Other tribes referred to it as the Sprouting Grass Moon, the Growing Moon, and the Egg Moon. Some coastal tribes even referred to it as the Full Fish Moon as the shad swam upstream to spawn at about this time.

In other space news, Space X has managed to land a rocket on a floating barge for the first time and is in the process of sending a cargo ship to the international space station with an inflatable room. This room is designed to give astronauts a safe place to live and work in space. In addition, evidence is mounting that our solar system does have another planet yet to be discovered. So even though Pluto has been demoted to a planetoid, it may still be true that our solar system has nine planets.

[Author's Note: Much of the material for this article came from the Sea and Sky website, <http://www.seasky.org>]

*Carolyn Kaberline is a semi-retired public school teacher, having retired from one school district after teaching high school English for 45 years and now is a substitute teacher in another school district. Additionally, she is a script consultant for Project:*

*Potemkin, a fan-created Star Trek-themed web series. In her spare time, she is an amateur astronomer and member of the Northeast Kansas Amateur Astronomers' League (NEKAAL) as well as a freelance journalist.*



All answers can be found at:

<http://www.bdcusa.com/downloads/april2016.pdf>

